Nonpolitical Trips and Mr. Kennedy

By DAVID LAWRENCE

WASHINGTON—The Republicans haven't chosen their Presidential candidate yet but President Kennedy has already begun his campaign for re-election. What are billed as "nonpolitical" trips are really opportunities to cement political friendships and to visit with the local leaders—an important piece of political campaigning in itself.

Mr. Kennedy goes this weekend to Florida—primarily, it is announced, to take a first-hand look at the work being done on the new U.S. Moon-shot facilities. He will be briefed on various aspects of the program and on other phases of the civilian space projects, and will witness the launching of a Polaris A-2 missile.

NOW ALL OF THIS is within the legitimate purview of the Presidential office, but the question arises whether the trip was purposely arranged for the inspection of the space projects or whether the visit to Cape Canaveral is just an excuse to mend political fences in Florida.

The Tampa Times, an independent paper and one of the largest and most influential dailies in the state, said editorially the other day:

"PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S trip to Florida is billed as nonpolitical. That, of course, fools nobody. No President less than a year from a bid for re-election takes nonpolitical trips. Mr. Kennedy will be making a strong appeal for votes and support in an attempt to swing Florida out of the Republican column, which it occupied in the last three Presidential races."

Mr. Kennedy is scheduled to make five talks in Florida—in the northern as well as southern part of the state. He addresses at Tampa a dedication ceremony marking the 50th anniversary of an early aviation flight. He then talks to the Florida State Chamber of Commerce, and this is followed—also in Tampa—by a speech to 600 labor leaders from various unions which are influential throughout Florida.

IN MIAMI THERE is to be what is described officially as a "rally" at the airport, where he doubtless will speak to the crowd to be assembled there. Then the President will attend a dinner of the Inter-American Press Institute.

When Mr. Kennedy left here yesterday, he went first to New York to address the A.F.L.-C.I.O. convention. He hasn't missed a speech to the national labor leaders at their meeting each year since he has been in the White House.

Vietnam Negotiation?

By WILLIAM R. FRYE

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y.—One of the most interesting effects of the coup in Saigon has been revival of talk about a negotiated peace for Vietnam.

Soundings in Hanoi are understood to have elicited expressions of interest from Ho Chi Minh, the Viet Cong leader. Just how far the explorations have gone is not known, but informed U.N. diplomats are taking the project seriously.

IT IS, IN A SENSE, paradoxical that this should have happened in the wake of the coup that overthrew Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu. One of many impelling reasons for the coup was suspicion that Nhu was secretly trying to come to terms with Hanoi.

What is involved now, however, is not a subterranean deal which could undercut the war effort. On the contrary, the junta gives every sign of prosecuting the war with new vigor and effectiveness. It has a far better base of public support from which to do so.

What is involved is a serious first step intended to lead to a revival of the Geneva Conference of 1954 and thence to one of two solutions: permanent partition, or reunification and neutralism.

THE WEST WOULD enter a Vietnam negotiation in a much stronger position than it entered the Laos conference of 1961-62. At that time, pro-Western forces were losing the Laos war. As a result of the Saigon coup they have every prospect now of winning the one in Vietnam.

They have, that is to say, every prospect of successfully pacifying South Vietnam. The task of conquering the North would be of an entirely different order of magnitude.

This improved prospect of victory for Saigon puts the West in a strong bargaining posture. It does much to explain Ho Chi Minh's receptivity to recent diplomatic overtures.

IT IS, HOWEVER, by no means the only favorable factor in the equation.

South Vietnam is today much less likely to go Communist of its own volition. Fury at the Diem-Nhu regime had begun to turn many who would otherwise have been anti-Communists into Communist sympathizers.

Indeed, the flow of political influence in the future may be northward rather than southward. The South is in a position to exert a considerable pull on the North.

Still another factor is Ho Chi Minh's own unhappy stance in the middle of a Sino-Soviet tug of war. Moscow-trained and oriented, he has resisted his party's drift toward Peking. Centuries of animosity between Vietnamese and Chinese have made dependence on China still more distasteful to him.

YET MOST OF Ho Chi Minh's younger followers have insisted upon relying on China, and they have had geography and logistics on their side. More and more, the Viet Cong has in fact come to ride the dragon's tail.

A peace settlement could release Hanoi from some of the necessity to depend upon Peking. Ho Chi Minh could then turn back to Moscow, or become more free-wheeling. Moscow unquestionably would be equally happy to arrest the spread of Chinese influence.

The WORLD in Focus

General Charles de Gaulle was seeking to encourage Moscow in this view, U.N. people believe, when he spoke of freeing Vietnam from "foreign influences."

All these advantages for the West do not guarantee that a negotiation with the Viet Cong would be fruitful. They do not even mean that a negotiation would necessarily be in the Western interest.

BUT THERE IS a growing desire in the diplomatic community to find out. If three more years of war—with incalculable loss of life and an expenditure by the United States alone of some [illegible] billion—would produce, as its final result, the same partitioned Vietnam which could be won at the bargaining table, then it would be folly to fight.

But there is as yet no agreement on what should emerge from a Vietnamese peace negotiation. Until there is agreement, talk of peace is not likely to be much more than talk.

Americanism

Dallas Times Herald

WHAT IS AMERICANISM? We know what Americanism is. We were born in it; we suckled Americanism from birth. And the foundation stone of real Americanism is the freedom to believe and to disbelieve, the right to hold a point of view, no matter how much it might be counter to someone else's.

On this foundation can be erected all kinds of disagreement, ideas or divergent philosophies. But they must be contested by reason and logic, not by force and the argument of brawling brawn.

About Youth

Dodge City (Kansas) Globe

TO STAY YOUNG, associate with young people. And to get old in a hurry, try to keep up with them.